

## Honoring Bob Whittier

Despite an ear infection that rendered him deaf at the age of 7, Bob has enjoyed successful careers first as an airframe and powerplant (A&P) mechanic and later as a freelance writer in the aviation and boating fields.

He earned his private pilot certificate and A&P rating in the early 1940s and worked at the Norwood, Massachusetts, airport south of Boston for a number of years. His career in writing for aviation publications began in 1944 when *Air Pilot and Technician* magazine printed an extensive letter that Bob had written about aircraft maintenance. Leighton Collins, editor of *Air Facts* magazine, then encouraged Bob to become a regular contributor to that magazine, launching his freelance writing career. He also wrote for Max Karant, who edited the original *Flying* magazine. Consequently, his views on the importance of aviation literature are well founded.

Since 1944, Bob has written more than 2,500 articles for various aviation, boating, outdoor life, and mechanical magazines.

Upon receiving the Bax Seat Trophy from *Flying* magazine editor Mac MacClellan, Bob asked his son, John, to read these words that Bob had written:

"When I lost my hearing as a result of an infection when I was 7 years old, I became more of a reader than other youngsters. Reading, in time, led me into freelance magazine writing. Unlike television, movies, and popular music, most of what we all read every day features correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. My ability to write clearly and interestingly is the result of being drilled in good writing form by much reading.

"Another point I want to make is that while bookstores are full of books for little children, there is a woeful lack of good, clean, inspiring literature aimed at older children and teenagers. So I ask everyone to think and talk about this unfortunate situation.

"Finally, the fact that I have won the Bax Seat award tells me that I have succeeded as a writer. In our society there are many handicapped and disadvantaged children. Too often they lose hope and end up as unhappy failures. I very strongly believe that my interest in airplanes, as inspired by Lindbergh's trans-Atlantic flight of 1927, has played a key role in helping me to lead an interesting and productive life. If you know such a child, I urge you to help him or her to find some interesting subject or activity in which they can do well. A healthy, active mind is the key to overcoming a handicap.

"Thank you, *Flying* magazine, and thank you, EAA!"

To Bob we say, congratulations, and thank you for all your hard work. We hope you'll continue to inspire us with your words for years to come!

Editor's Note: The Bax Seat Trophy is named after *Flying* magazine's famous columnist, the late Gordon Baxter, who used that title for his monthly column. The trophy has been awarded since 1998 to an aviation writer who communicates the excitement, history, romance, and lore of flight to his or her readers.

